

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5290

C 32 L 09

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning requests made by a party relating to gas or electrical company discounts for low-income senior customers and low-income customers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Brown, Fraser, Kauffman, McAuliffe, Shin, Murray, Eide, Keiser, Berkey and Regala).

Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy
House Committee on Technology, Energy & Communications

Background: Utilities regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) are generally prohibited from offering free or reduced rates. There are exceptions for such groups as charities and "indigent and destitute persons," among others. Because no definition of "indigent and destitute persons" was provided in law, few if any gas or electric utilities were offering free or reduced rates for low-income customers prior to 1999. In that year, regulated gas and electric utilities were authorized by statute to provide discounts and other services to low-income customers and low-income senior customers.

Under the current law, only a gas or electric utility may initiate a request to approve or change a low-income program. The utility may make the request as part of a general rate case, a single rate case, or file a tariff, which would become effective after 30 days unless set for a hearing by the WUTC.

Summary: A party to a general rate case hearing, in addition to an electrical or gas company, may request changes to a gas or electric utility's program for low-income senior customers and low-income customers.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	0
House	97	0

Effective: July 26, 2009

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.